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THE BROKERAGE-MEDIATED POLICY LEGACY MODEL: FROM HISTORICAL STRUCTURE TO ELECTORAL NETWORK RECONFIGURATION

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ABSTRACT
This article develops the Brokerage-Mediated Policy Legacy Model to explain how historical state policies shape contemporary electoral mobilization through durable social networks and political intermediaries. Using a qualitative temporal-comparative case study of East Lampung's 2020 and 2024 local elections, data from 20 informants and 15 primary documents were analyzed in MAXQDA using deductive-convergent coding and a Gioia-informed structure. Findings show that transmigration created a permissive social infrastructure rather than fixed ethnic voting blocs. Javanese-NU networks became electorally consequential through patrons, parties, kiai, and local brokers. The 2020 configuration consolidated these actors, whereas 2024 produced fragmentation and recombination. The model links historical institutionalism, ethnic politics, and brokerage by distinguishing structural persistence from changing electoral alignment.

INTRODUCTION

Local electoral politics rarely begins at the moment a campaign is formally launched. Candidates enter social arenas that have already been structured by earlier state policies, demographic change, settlement histories, organizational development, and long-term relations among communities. Indonesia provides a particularly revealing setting for examining this historical embeddedness because democratization and decentralization expanded electoral competition without eliminating informal political networks. Instead, local elections increasingly combine formal party competition with candidate-centered alliances, patronage, religious authority, community organizations, and political brokers (Aspinall & Hicken, 2020; Hicken et al., 2022; Tawakkal et al., 2020).

Recent brokerage research has significantly improved explanations of how candidates reach voters. Indonesian brokers are not recruited solely through monetary exchange; friendship, shared organizational membership, local knowledge, and social ties also structure campaign networks (Tawakkal et al., 2020). In weak-party environments, candidates may invest in well-connected intermediaries rather than directly purchasing individual votes (Hicken et al., 2022). Comparative evidence from the Philippines similarly shows that network centrality and social proximity affect targeting and voting behavior (Ravanilla, Haim, & Hicken, 2022; Ravanilla, Davidson, & Hicken, 2022). These studies shift attention from isolated transactions toward the relational architecture of electoral mobilization.

A second literature demonstrates that Indonesian voting cannot be reduced to clientelism. Religious and ethnic identities continue to shape political preferences, but their effects are contextual rather than automatic. Research on the 2017 Jakarta gubernatorial election identifies substantial religious and ethnic effects on vote choice (Mujani, 2020; Sumaktoyo, 2021), while national and local studies show that ideology, religious identity, candidate performance, and material considerations can coexist within the same electoral calculus (Fossati et al., 2020; Budi, 2024; Fossati, 2025). The relevant analytical problem is therefore not simply whether identity matters, but how identity becomes electorally actionable.

This problem is especially important in Lampung, where contemporary demographic and political structures are inseparable from the long history of state-sponsored transmigration. Transmigration changed settlement patterns, ethnic composition, access to resources, and the institutional life of local communities. Recent research demonstrates that this policy left continuing political effects in Lampung and that ethnicity and religion remain embedded in organizations mobilized during local elections (Warganegara & Waley, 2022, 2024). Yet this literature does not fully explain how historically produced communities become connected to contemporary patron, party, religious, and brokerage networks, or why those connections change across elections.

East Lampung makes that unresolved mechanism visible. The same broad historical landscape - including Javanese communities, Nahdlatul Ulama (NU)-related networks, pesantren, political parties, religious leaders, and village-level intermediaries - was present across the 2020 and 2024 local executive elections. Nevertheless, the political alignment of these actors changed substantially. In 2020, political patrons, the National Awakening Party (Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa, PKB), kiai, and grassroots networks operated in a relatively consolidated configuration. In 2024, parts of these previously overlapping networks diverged and were subsequently recombined around competing candidates.

This temporal contrast generates the article's central puzzle: how can a relatively durable historical and social structure produce different electoral network configurations across consecutive elections? The article argues that transmigration should be conceptualized as a permissive policy legacy rather than a deterministic source of ethnic voting. Its political effects are mediated through historically embedded social networks that contemporary actors activate, contest, and reconnect. To capture this process, the article develops the *Brokerage-Mediated Policy Legacy Model*. The model links historical policy legacy to social embeddedness, ethnic-religious network formation, brokerage activation, and electoral network reconfiguration.

The article asks how the historical legacy of transmigration becomes converted into contemporary electoral mobilization through ethnic, religious, partisan, and brokerage networks, and why those networks generate different configurations across the 2020 and 2024 East Lampung local elections. Its contribution is threefold: it refines historical institutionalism by separating structural persistence from political alignment; it extends brokerage research by distinguishing temporary campaign organization from durable social embeddedness; and it advances ethnic-politics research by replacing a simple ethnic-voting logic with network-mediated identity mobilization.

METHODOLOGY

This study uses a qualitative case-study design combined with a within-case temporal comparison of the 2020 and 2024 East Lampung local executive elections. East Lampung is analytically useful because its contemporary social structure was deeply shaped by transmigration while the two electoral cycles reveal substantial variation in political alignment within a broadly persistent historical setting. The design therefore allows relatively durable structural conditions to be separated from changing political relationships.

The central unit of analysis is the *electoral network configuration*: the patterned set of relationships connecting candidates, political patrons, political parties, religious authorities, local brokers, community organizations, and grassroots constituencies in a specific electoral cycle. The analysis does not treat ethnic groups

as homogeneous voting blocs or individual actors as isolated decision-makers. Instead, it examines which actors occupy strategically important positions, how they are connected, what resources they control, and how their relationships change between elections.

Empirical materials were collected through in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, group interviews, and documentary analysis. The study involved 20 informants comprising political elites, community leaders, kiai, local brokers, and bureaucratic actors. The documentary corpus consisted of 15 primary documents, including policy archives, demographic materials, and campaign-related documents. These sources were used to reconstruct the historical legacy of transmigration and to triangulate accounts of electoral alliances and mobilization.

All qualitative material was managed in MAXQDA. The analysis used deductive-convergent coding: initial sensitizing codes were derived from the theoretical framework - policy legacy, demographic restructuring, settlement pattern, identity activation, patronage, brokerage, party organization, and electoral mobilization - while the coding remained open to inductive categories emerging from the empirical material. Evidence was also tagged by electoral cycle to enable systematic comparison between 2020 and 2024.

A data structure adapted from the Gioia approach was used to connect empirical statements to theoretical interpretation. First-order concepts remained close to observed practices; second-order themes captured historically embedded infrastructure, network formation, brokerage activation, consolidation, fragmentation, and recombination; and aggregate dimensions organized the process into policy legacy, network formation, brokerage activation, and electoral network reconfiguration. MAXQDA was used to maintain traceability from source segment to code, theme, aggregate dimension, and temporal context.

The analytical strategy functioned as qualitative process tracing. The analysis first identified persistent structures associated with transmigration; second, it examined the formation of ethnic-religious and organizational networks; third, it traced how patrons, parties, kiai, and local brokers converted those networks into electoral channels; and fourth, it compared the 2020 and 2024 configurations. Credibility was strengthened through source and method triangulation and member checking. Coding frequency was not treated as a measure of causal importance; the purpose was explanatory reconstruction of the relational mechanism.

Table 2. Gioia-Informed Analytical Structure

Illustrative first-order concepts	Second-order themes	Aggregate dimensions
Javanese demographic concentration; clustered settlements; long-term demographic transformation	Historically embedded demographic and spatial structure	Policy Legacy

Illustrative first-order concepts	Second-order themes	Aggregate dimensions
Pesantren; religious gatherings; NU-related institutions; recurring community relations	Institutional reproduction of community networks	Policy Legacy
Javanese community ties; Nahdliyin affiliation; interpersonal and religious trust	Ethnic-religious network formation	Network Formation
Patron resources; kiai authority; PKB channels; village-level interpersonal ties	Differentiated network resources	Network Formation
Patron endorsement; kiai political signaling; party coordination; broker mobilization	Conversion of social networks into electoral networks	Brokerage Activation
Patron-party-kiai-broker convergence in 2020	Relational convergence	Consolidation
Party/patron shift versus continued support among parts of kiai/NU networks in 2024	Relational divergence	Fragmentation
Alternative Nahdliyin networks; new party coalitions; dispersed local brokers	Construction of alternative political channels	Recombination

RESEARCH RESULT

Policy Legacy: Transmigration as the Historical Production of Political Infrastructure

The first aggregate dimension identifies transmigration as the historical source of a durable social infrastructure. The empirical materials show that its legacy extended beyond demographic relocation. Concentrations of Javanese settlers, clustered settlement patterns, agricultural communities, and the subsequent development of religious and community institutions produced recurring social relationships that remained politically relevant long after the original policy intervention.

The most important implication is that these structures were politically available but not inherently electoral. Pesantren, religious gatherings, and NU-related institutions primarily reproduced community and religious life. Their political value emerged because they created repeated interaction, recognized authority, and channels through which information could travel. Transmigration therefore generated the architecture of later mobilization without determining its electoral direction.

Network Formation: From Settlement Communities to Multiplex Ethnic-Religious Networks

The second aggregate dimension concerns the relational infrastructure produced within this historical arena. Ethnic, religious, organizational, and local ties frequently overlapped. Javanese identity provided social familiarity, while Nahdliyin affiliation linked communities through kiai, pesantren, religious gatherings, and organizational relationships. These connections formed multiplex networks rather than a single ethnic hierarchy.

The political significance of this network lay in its convertibility. Because the relationships predated campaign organizations, they offered established channels through which political messages could circulate. Yet access was not automatic or monopolized. Different actors controlled different resources, creating a brokerage problem: candidates required intermediaries capable of connecting elite political strategies to socially embedded constituencies.

Brokerage Activation: Converting Social Networks into Electoral Networks

Four actor categories were central to political activation: political patrons, PKB, kiai, and local brokers. Political patrons contributed resources and elite-level alliances; PKB provided formal organizational channels; kiai contributed moral authority and access to religious constituencies; and local brokers contributed localized information and interpersonal reach. None of these resources alone was sufficient to explain mobilization. Electoral capacity emerged from their relational combination.

Kiai occupied particularly significant positions because their authority was rooted in pre-existing religious and community relations rather than campaign appointment. Some therefore functioned as high-capacity brokers connecting political elites, religious organizations, local leaders, congregations, and grassroots voters. Local brokers performed a more territorial translation function, adapting elite-level signals to village and polling-station contexts. Voters nevertheless retained agency; endorsements structured access and persuasion but did not guarantee compliance.

Table 3. Actor Resources and Brokerage Functions

Actor	Primary resource	Brokerage function
Political patron	Material resources and elite political access	Establishes alliances and resource flows.
PKB	Formal party organization	Coordinates campaign structures and links formal politics to constituencies.
Kiai/religious leader	Moral authority, religious legitimacy, and community trust	Translates social-religious legitimacy into political signaling and network access.

Actor	Primary resource	Brokerage function
Local broker	Personal ties, territorial knowledge, and grassroots information	Translates political strategy into village-level interaction and mobilization.
Voters/grassroots constituencies	Electoral agency and local social embeddedness	Accept, reinterpret, negotiate, or reject political cues.

Electoral Network Reconfiguration: Consolidation, Fragmentation, and Recombination

The 2020 election represented a consolidated electoral network configuration. Political patronage, PKB structures, important kiai/NU-related networks, and grassroots brokers largely reinforced the same electoral direction. The significance of this pattern did not lie simply in the existence of a Javanese-NU constituency; rather, mobilizational capacity increased because complementary network resources were aligned. Shared identity, institutional access, religious legitimacy, and broker coordination operated through mutually reinforcing channels.

The 2024 election demonstrated that this alignment was contingent. The underlying social infrastructure remained recognizable, but relationships among its politically important nodes changed. Nunik and the formal PKB structure shifted support toward Ela, while parts of NU-related networks and several kiai continued to support Dawam. Formal party authority and religious-network authority therefore became partially decoupled, producing competing political signals and more dispersed brokerage.

Fragmentation did not destroy the inherited network. It generated recombination. Actors supporting Dawam activated alternative Nahdliyin channels, relied on a different party coalition, and mobilized alternative or more autonomous local brokers. The process therefore involved political rewiring rather than social replacement. The same historically embedded network could support different coalitions because its component actors possessed partially autonomous resources and legitimacy.

Table 4. Structural Continuity and Relational Change, 2020-2024

Analytical dimension	2020 configuration	2024 configuration
Transmigration-generated social infrastructure	Persistent	Persistent
Javanese-NU relational infrastructure	Persistent and politically aligned	Persistent but politically contested
Patron-party relationship	Broadly aligned	Reoriented
Party-kiai/NU relationship	Relatively convergent	Fragmented
Broker organization	More coordinated	More dispersed and competitive

Analytical dimension	2020 configuration	2024 configuration
Political signaling	Relatively unified	Competing
Dominant relational outcome	Consolidation	Fragmentation followed by recombination

Taken together, the results support a five-stage relational mechanism: policy legacy -> network formation -> brokerage activation -> electoral network configuration -> consolidation/fragmentation/recombination. The principal source of variation between the two elections was therefore not a transformation of the historical social structure itself, but a change in the relationships among actors seeking to activate that structure.

DISCUSSION

The findings address a broader theoretical problem: how can historically durable social structures generate changing political outcomes? The East Lampung case suggests that institutional persistence, ethnic identity, and brokerage should not be treated as competing explanations. They operate at different levels of the same historical-relational process. The evidence supports three propositions: the transmigration legacy is permissive rather than deterministic; identity becomes political through brokerage-mediated activation; and structural continuity can coexist with relational reconfiguration. Together these propositions constitute the Brokerage-Mediated Policy Legacy Model.

Proposition 1: Policy Legacy Is Permissive Rather Than Deterministic

The first proposition confirms the historical-institutionalist insight that earlier policy choices can generate long-lasting political consequences, but it refines the level at which persistence should be located. Pierson (2000, 2004) emphasizes increasing returns, sequencing, and the difficulty of reversing institutional trajectories. In East Lampung, this logic is visible in the persistence of settlement concentrations, community institutions, religious networks, and local authority structures created or reinforced through transmigration. Candidates compete within a social field they did not create.

However, the comparison shows that the durability of social infrastructure does not imply the durability of its political direction. A Javanese settlement concentration can persist while candidate support changes; an NU-related network can remain socially influential while its political alignment fragments; and a kiai can retain moral authority while supporting a different coalition. The appropriate causal sequence is therefore not past institution -> persistent political outcome, but past policy -> persistent social infrastructure -> changing political activation -> variable electoral outcome.

This refinement specifies where path dependence is strongest. It is strongest at the level of the social opportunity structure and weaker at the level of electoral alignment. The concept of permissive policy legacy therefore improves historical

institutionalism by incorporating mediation and relational agency: inherited structures constrain and enable political action, but contemporary actors still compete to determine how those structures are used.

Proposition 2: Identity Becomes Electoral through Brokerage-Mediated Activation

The second proposition refines ethnic-politics research by separating identity availability from identity activation. Existing research correctly demonstrates that ethnicity and religion can shape political preferences in Indonesia (Mujani, 2020; Sumaktoyo, 2021; Budi, 2024), and Lampung studies correctly identify the political legacies of transmigration (Warganegara & Waley, 2022, 2024). Yet demographic presence and identity salience do not specify how social categories are converted into campaign support.

The East Lampung evidence identifies brokerage as that conversion mechanism. Patrons connect resources and elite alliances; parties provide formal campaign structures; kiai contribute religious legitimacy and embedded authority; and local brokers connect these resources to households and village-level constituencies. Ethnic and religious identities thus operate as social resources that facilitate recognition, communication, and trust, but their electoral meaning is contingent on the intermediaries who connect them to particular candidates.

This shifts the analytical question from whether ethnicity influences voting to the relational conditions under which ethnicity becomes electorally consequential. A simple ethnic-voting model - identity -> candidate preference - is replaced by a network-mediated model: identity -> social relations -> community institutions -> political intermediaries -> candidate linkage -> electoral mobilization. This formulation also preserves voter agency because brokerage shapes access and persuasion without assuming automatic compliance.

Proposition 3: Structural Continuity Coexists with Relational Reconfiguration

The third proposition explains why the same historical arena generated different electoral configurations in 2020 and 2024. The key distinction is between structural continuity and relational continuity. Structural continuity refers to the persistence of communities, institutions, identities, religious authority, party organizations, and potential brokerage channels. Relational continuity refers to the persistence of political alignment among the actors occupying those structures. The two need not coincide.

This distinction extends brokerage research. Aspinall and Hicken (2020) characterize Indonesian success teams as comparatively temporary and candidate-centered, while Hicken et al. (2022) show that candidates invest in well-connected intermediaries. The East Lampung case does not reject these findings; it separates the organizational temporality of brokerage from the historical temporality of broker resources. Campaign teams may be temporary, but the trust, authority, community membership, and institutional access that make brokers valuable can be much older.

The 2024 fragmentation further shows that networks should be analyzed dynamically. When patrons, parties, religious leaders, and brokers no longer reinforce the same political direction, the network does not necessarily disappear. It can be recombined. Actors reconnect existing relational resources into new coalitions and mobilization channels. The political machine is therefore best understood as a changing configuration built on a more durable social substrate.

What the Model Adds to Existing Theory

The model makes three explicit theoretical interventions. For historical institutionalism, it separates structural persistence from political alignment and treats policy legacy as an inherited field of opportunities that requires contemporary activation. For brokerage theory, it distinguishes temporary broker organization from durable broker embeddedness and identifies historical policy as one source of that embeddedness. For ethnic-politics research, it replaces demographic determinism with network-mediated identity activation, explaining why the same identity network can produce different electoral alignments across time.

These interventions are integrative rather than additive. The model proposes a single mechanism: historical state policy reorganizes population and institutions; these arrangements generate durable relational infrastructures; political intermediaries selectively activate those infrastructures; and the alignment among network nodes determines whether mobilization consolidates, fragments, or recombines. This mechanism resolves the apparent tension between historical persistence and electoral volatility.

The broader implication extends beyond East Lampung. State-led resettlement, frontier development, migration, and territorial reorganization in other settings may leave political effects not because descendants of settlers vote uniformly, but because such policies create durable social structures that later political actors can mobilize. Comparative research should therefore ask what social infrastructures a historical policy created, who occupies brokerage positions within them, and how those positions are reconfigured across elections.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study develops the Brokerage-Mediated Policy Legacy Model to explain how historical policy structures become politically consequential without mechanically determining electoral outcomes. The East Lampung case shows that transmigration created a durable social infrastructure through demographic concentration, settlement patterns, community institutions, and religious networks. These structures persisted across the 2020 and 2024 elections, but their political effects depended on contemporary relationships among patrons, PKB, kiai, local brokers, and voters.

The main theoretical conclusion is that policy legacy is permissive, identity activation is brokerage-mediated, and electoral change can occur through relational

reconfiguration under conditions of structural continuity. The 2020 configuration was characterized by relatively strong convergence among major political nodes, whereas the 2024 election produced fragmentation and subsequent recombination. The political legacy of transmigration therefore lies not in producing a fixed ethnic voting bloc, but in generating historically embedded networks that can be activated and rewired.

For political parties and candidates, the practical implication is that formal organizational structures should not be assumed to control socially embedded constituencies. Religious leaders, village-level intermediaries, and informal community networks possess partially autonomous sources of authority. Electoral strategies that treat ethnic or religious communities as homogeneous blocs risk misreading local political agency. For election administrators and oversight bodies, the findings highlight the importance of monitoring how informal networks can become channels for identity-based campaigning, patronage, and money politics while recognizing that community and religious organizations also possess legitimate non-electoral functions.

For scholarship, the model recommends analyzing local elections through electoral network configurations rather than through isolated variables. Researchers should identify the historical origin of relational infrastructures, the actors who occupy brokerage positions, the resources attached to those positions, and the temporal processes through which networks consolidate, fragment, and recombine.

ADVANCED RESEARCH

The study has three principal limitations. First, it is a single-regency case study, so its contribution is analytical rather than statistical generalization. Comparative research across transmigration regions with different ethnic, religious, and party configurations is required to assess the portability of the model. Second, the evidence gives greater attention to elites, religious figures, brokers, and mobilization actors than to independently sampled grassroots voters. Future research should directly examine how voters interpret conflicting endorsements and network pressures. Third, the study reconstructs network configuration qualitatively; it does not estimate network centrality, density, or causal effect sizes.

Future research can therefore combine qualitative process tracing with social network analysis and survey or experimental methods. A particularly useful design would map actor centrality and brokerage positions across successive elections, then test whether changes in network position predict mobilization capacity or voter exposure. Comparative mixed-method studies could also examine whether brokerage-mediated policy legacies occur in other areas shaped by internal migration, resettlement, land settlement, or state-directed demographic change.

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